

Exploring MyPyramid



Make Half YOUR Grains Whole

The new food pyramid at www.MyPyramid.gov has renamed the food groups. The former “bread and cereals” group has been replaced with the “grain” group. Nutrition experts recommend that half of the grain foods in your diet should be whole grains.

Can you tell if a FOOD is “Whole Grain”? Try these questions

1. **True/false:** You can tell if a food is “whole grain” by its color.
2. **True/false:** You can tell if a food is “whole grain” by the food ingredient list.
3. **True/false:** You can tell if a food is “whole grain” by words such as “multigrain” on the front of the package.

The answers are 1. False; 2. True; 3. False

Read the ingredient label to learn about your food choices. Look for one or more of these words as the first ingredient in a whole-grain food:

brown rice	oatmeal	whole rye
bulgur	whole-grain corn	whole wheat
graham flour	whole oats	wild rice

Color is not a good indication of a whole grain. Breads can be brown because of added molasses, artificial colorings or other colored ingredients. Foods labeled with “multigrain,” “stone-ground,” “100 percent wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain” or “bran” usually are not whole-grain products.

Look for the whole-grain health claim on the front of food packages. Whole-grain foods that meet Food and Drug Administration guidelines also can carry a health claim such as the following: “Diets high in plant foods, i.e., fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole-grain cereals, are associated with a lower occurrence of coronary heart disease and cancers of the lung, colon, esophagus and stomach.”

What are the Differences Between Whole Grains and Refined Grains?

Whole grains are made from the entire kernel and include the germ, bran and endosperm. Refined grains are milled so the germ and bran are removed. Refined grain products include white bread, white flour and white rice. These products usually have a finer texture and longer shelf life.

The process of refining grains removes the fiber, B vitamins and iron. Enrichment is the process of adding back B vitamins and iron.

Fiber is not always added back to refined products. Fiber is found naturally in whole grains. Fiber fills you up, so eating it makes you feel fuller faster.

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This can help with weight management. Studies also have shown that adequate fiber in the diet can help with diabetes management and may help lower blood pressure.

Get more whole Grains in your Diet

- ▲ Check www.MyPyramid.gov to see the recommended amount of grains based on your gender, age and activity level.
- ▲ Substitute whole-grain products for things you already buy.
- ▲ Try using brown rice and whole-wheat pasta in casseroles and other dishes.
- ▲ Add or substitute whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked goods.
- ▲ Eat whole-grain crackers, baked whole-grain tortilla chips or popcorn for a snack.
- ▲ Serve children ready-to-eat whole-grain cereals, such as a toasted oat cereal, for snacks or breakfast.

For more information on making whole grains a part of your diet, visit www.MyPyramid.gov

For more information about nutrition, food safety and health, visit www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/food.htm

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Try this example

The amount of grains you need depends on your age, sex and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are in the chart. Most Americans consume enough grains, but few are whole grains. At least half of all the grains should be whole grains.

Question: How much food from the grain group should an 11-year-old girl eat daily?
How many ounces should be whole grain?

		Daily recommendation*	Daily minimum amount of whole grains
Children	2 - 3 years old	3 ounce equivalents**	1½ ounce equivalents**
	4 - 8 years old	4 - 5 ounce equivalents**	2-2½ ounce equivalents**
Girls	9 - 13 years old	5 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	14 - 18 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
Boys	9 - 13 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	14 - 18 years old	7 ounce equivalents**	3½ ounce equivalents**
Women	19 - 30 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	31 - 50 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
Men	19 - 30 years old	8 ounce equivalents**	4 ounce equivalents**
	31 - 50 years old	7 ounce equivalents**	3½ ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**

* These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

** One "ounce equivalent" from the grain group equals:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal
- ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta or cooked cereal

Answer: 5 ounce equivalents, with 3 ounce equivalents as whole grains

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